

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 11359 101353Z

44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 SAB-01 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01

OC-05 CCO-00 AID-05 /097 W
----- 042004

O P 101300Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6149

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 11359 101353Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 11359

GENEVA FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT HESITATING OVER USE OF ARMY IN NORTH LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 11301

1. NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN ANNOUNCED ON USING THE ARMY TO QUELL THE STRIFE IN NORTH LEBANON. THE CABINET MEETING SEPT 9 REPORTEDLY REACHED A DECISION TO CALL IN THE ARMY, BUT THE MOVE HAS BEEN DELAYED PENDING FURTHER CONSULTATIONS AMONG POLITICAL LEADERS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT KARAME IS SEEING 'ARAFAT TODAY OT GET HIS VIEWS. IF HE OBTAINS 'ARAFAT'S GO-AHEAD, THE RUBICON MAY BE CROSSED.

2. THE ARMY'S INVOLVEMENT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE REMOVAL OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ISKANDER GHANEM, WHO IS PERSONA NON GRATA TO THE MOSLEMS. THE EXACT FORM OF THE REMOVAL--I.E., EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR RESIGNATION--IS UNCLEAR AND PERHAPS STILL UNDECIDED. OBSERVERS NOW BELIEVE THAT COL JULES BOUSTANY, THE PRESENT G-2 AND LIKE GHANEM AN MARONITE, WILL BE ACTING COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, NOT DRUZE CHIEF-OF-STAFF SAID NASRALLEH AS WE REPORTED REFTEL. BOUSTANY MAY SHARE ARMY POWER WITH A HASTILY FORMED COMMAND COUNCIL OF SOME KIND. THE OBJECTIONS TO NASRALLAH ARE, FIRST, THAT HE IS NOT A MARONITE AND, SECOND, THAT HE IS DISLIKED BY DRUZE LEADER JUMBLATT. THE ATTITUDE OF JUMBLATT TO USING THE ARMY REMAINS PUBLICLY HOSTILE, BUT JUDGING FROM HIS LATEST STATEMENTS IT IS BECOMING AMBIGUOUS. THERE IS HOPE JUMBLATT CAN BE PERSUADED TO SOFTEN HIS OPPOSITION.

3. THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CHANGE AT THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING FROM WHAT WE REPORTED REFTEL. ZGHORTIANS HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT COUNTERING YESTERDAY'S NEWS THAT ZGHORTA WAS UNDER ATTACK, WITH THE RESULT THAT RIGHTIST PAPERS TODAY, SEPT 10, ARE SAYING THAT ZGHORTIANS HAVE THEMSELVES OCCUPIED KEY SPOTS NEAR TRIPOLI. SITUATION IS INDEED CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 11359 101353Z

FUSED AND A TRUE MAP OF THE FIGHTING ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CONSTRUCT. HOWEVER, THE CITY OF TRIPOLI ITSELF IS RELIABLY REPORTED TO BE CALMER THAN A FEW DAYS AGO.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW INCIDENTS IN BEIRUT DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS, BUT CITY IS RELATIVELY NORMAL AS OF 1200 HOURS (LOCAL) SEPT 10.
GODLEY

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NNN

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